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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0460

INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHJL/AMEMBASSY BANJUL PRIORITY 5340

RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAKAR 000539

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/W AND NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2018

TAGS: PREL PGOV GA SG

SUBJECT: SENEGAL DISTURBED BY IRANIAN ARMING OF THE GAMBIA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Jay T. Smith for reasons 1.5 B/D.

¶11. (C) On May 7, the Senegalese Foreign Ministry's director of the African and Asian Affairs Division, Momar Gueye, told Political Counselor his government is "disturbed" by Iran's efforts to build a security relationship with the Gambia. In particular, he said Senegal is concerned about Iran providing arms to the Gambia. He asked rhetorically, "Given that the Gambia is surrounded on three sides by Senegal, against whom would they be arming?" He said Senegal had expressed its concerns in strong terms to the Iranians. When asked at what level, Gueye said both President Abdoulaye Wade and Foreign Minister Cheikd Tidiane Gadio have raised the matter with their Iranian counterparts. Gueye opined that GOI would be respectful of Senegal's concerns because Iran needs Senegal to act as a honest broker with the West given Senegal's excellent relations with the Western powers and with Iran.

¶12. (C) When asked about Senegal's own security relationship with Iran and the recently signed defense cooperation agreement between the two countries, Gueye said he was unaware of the details in the document because the discussions were handled by the Ministry of Defense. Nevertheless, he said he was sure the agreement focused primarily on training.

Comment

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¶13. (C) While it might appear difficult to believe that Gueye would not know more about the defense cooperation agreement the Senegalese Minister of Defense recently signed with Iran, it's par for the course. During the meeting with Political Counselor, Gueye seemed unaware of the content of recent meetings his minister had with Deputy Secretary Negroponte and OIC Special Envoy Sada Cumber. Moreover, Gueye commented to Political Counselor that President Wade essentially handles policy with Iran personally with some input from the Foreign Minister and his closest advisers in the presidency. When asked about the much-rumored role of the president's son Karim Wade, as a go-between with Iran, Gueye expressed frustration saying, "he's everywhere" and "it's not clear what his role is."

SMITH